MOTHERING MODES: MOTHERHOOD AS A SITE OF POWER IN THE NOVELS OF TONI MORRISON

SYNOPSIS

OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH WORK FOR THE REGISTRATION

OF THE DEGREE FOR THE DOCTOR IN PHILOSOPHY TO

PT. RAVISHANKAR SHUKLA UNIVERSITY

RAIPUR, C.G.

SUPERVISOR

DR. PROTIBHA MUKHERJEE SAHUKAR

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, DEPT. OF ENGLISH

DURGA MAHAVIDYALAY, RAIPUR C.G.

Mitun Bhowmick

SCHOLAR

MITUN BHOWMICK

8/8/13

PRINCIPAL
DURGA MAHAVIDYALAYA
RAIPUR (C.G.)

RESEARCH CENTRE

DURGA MAHAVIDYALAYA, RAIPUR, C.G.

2013

Title of the Thesis

Mothering Modes: Motherhood as a Site of Power in the Novels of Toni Morrison

Introduction

Murderers, mammies and matriarchs, nurturers, caregivers, abandoners, and culture bearers- Toni Morrison's mother characters are as imperfect as the world in which they live. No matter her name, the role of mother is often a pivotal one in literature. In fictious and autobiographical works, African American writers have given pulsating portraits of what a mother is and what the act of mothering can be. Rarely ideal, the mother in African American literature may in fact be a biological mother or grandmother. Just as often, however, she is a sister, an aunt, an adoptive mother who provides the maternal heart of the story. She may be raising her children, mourning their loss or trying, after many years, to find them. These literary mothers range from being a tribute to real-life mothering to cautionary tales of motherhood gone wrong.

As a writer, Morrison personifies courage. She tells stories in such a way that one often do not wish to hear. She speaks as a Black woman in a world that still undervalues the voice of the Black woman. She blends the personal and the political astonishingly-for she feels very strongly that art should have meaning. To her it should depict African American cultural and social history, and she does so in a way that mesmerizes everyone from all ages, races, ethnicities, and genders. She has a rare writer's gift i.e. the knack to tell a powerful story by employing an equally powerful poetic language. One can say that Morrison herself is one of the ancestor figures she appanages in her work, guiding one to a much-needed understanding of the

past in order that they might recognize the urgent promise of the future, and doing so with a wisdom and eloquence unparalleled in American writing.

The literary careers of Morrison began in the 1960s. From *The Bluest Eye*, her first novel, in the late 1960s, through a Pulitzer winning *Beloved* and the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1993 to her most recent *Home*, unarguably, Morrison is one of the best writers at work today.

In her efforts to plumb the depths of human emotion, Morrison returns again and again to that most fundamental of personal relationships- the tie between mother and child. Motherhood is at the very core of human experience, and to truly grasp our capacity for love, for grief, for pain, for survival, one must take the full measure of motherhood, as Morrison does. Motherhood, in one form or another, is central to all of her novels. She is able to take historically and culturally African American interpretations of maternity and strip away the socially imposed limitations on that motherhood, thereby exposing the universal humanity of that experience. In so doing, she dissolves the boundaries of the maternal role, creating an ever-widening, intergenerational definition of the concept of mothering. This politics of the heart is Morrison's maternal theory.

A brief review of the work already done in the field

Bibliography Enclosed

Objectives

Morrison's portrayal of motherhood, mothers, and mothering in her selected novels would be the focus of this research. The objective here is to examine how Morrison's motherhood theory is actually the politics of heart, inspite of her mothers being mothers one is

not comfortable with or acknowledge easily. In particular it would be the endeavor to explore the theory of Black motherhood as different from White motherhood. The objective would also be to reconfigure hegemonic western notions of motherhood and to understand the meaning of the ancient properties of black women and at the same time also to establish that while motherhood as an institution is a male-defined site of oppression, women's own experience of mothering can nonetheless be a site of power.

Noteworthy contribution in the field of proposed work

Bibliography Enclosed

Proposed methodology during the tenure of research work

Research will be based on close scrutiny of the novels of Morrison as primary sources and serious investigation of criticism/comments/reviews of those novels as secondary sources.

The *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (7th ed., 2009) will be carefully followed.

Expected outcome of the proposed work

The expected outcome of the proposed work would be to demonstrate that Morrison portrays motherhood, in all of its dimensions - motherwork, motherlove and the motherline. Motherhood, is a persistent presence in the works of Morrison and in her view, is fundamentally and profoundly an act of resistance, essential and integral to black women's fight against racism and sexism and their ability to achieve well-being for themselves and their culture. In her reflections on motherhood, she unflinchingly articulates developed *theory of African American mothering* that is central to her larger political and philosophical stance on black womanhood.

The study would also try to demonstrate that Morrison develops a view of black motherhood that is, in terms of both maternal identity and role, radically different than the motherhood practiced and prescribed in the dominant culture. Morrison defines and positions maternal identity as a site of power for black women.

Bibliography in standard format

Enclosed

List of published papers of the candidate

Chapter Division for the Proposed Research Work

Chapter I: Delivering Motherhood: Toni Morrison's Theory of Motherhood

Chapter II Fatal Contractions: Intense Behavior in *The Bluest Eye* and *Sula*

Chapter III Rocking the Cradle: Finding Mothers in *Song of Solomon* and *Tar Baby*

Chapter IV Maternal Ambivalence: Ferocious Maternal Resistance in *Beloved*

Chapter V Ties that Bind: Maternal Power and Loss in *Jazz* and *Paradise*

Chapter VI Ain't That Love?: The Mother Knot in *Love* and *A Mercy*

Chapter VII Invisible Presence: Maternal Voice and the Construction of Mother-Son Relationships

Chapter VIII The Ship *and* the Safe Harbor: Thinking Maternal

Bibliography

Chapter I

Delivering Motherhood: Toni Morrison's Theory of Motherhood

Toni Morrison, a Nobel Prize and Pulitzer Prize-winning contemporary African American woman novelist, is known for her epic themes, vivid dialogue, richly detailed Black characters and maternal characters in all their different shades, underscoring the influence of history, society and economy on maternal bonds. Motherhood, in one form or another, is central to all of Morrison's nine novels to be discussed here. The aim is to explore Morrison's fiction to establish her stance on motherhood. The mothers that Morrison creates are exceedingly diverse. They exist both in the flesh and in fragile memories. They are named and unnamed, some occupying center stage while others are relegated to the periphery of the text. Maternal acts in Morrison's novels are not exactly the material of sentimentality because one can find mothers committing infanticide intentionally or accidentally; severely neglecting their children to the extent they die because of it; abusing children, or outrightly abandoning their children. Mothers in turn are raped, ravaged, whipped, sold, and shot; they throw themselves down wells, wander wild and naked in the woods, and at times are just unhinged. Yet in interviews and essays the picture that Morrison paints of what mothering can do for mothers, children, and community is decidedly rosier. Morrison's works, despite their representations of an often violent, terribly fraught mother-child experience, demonstrates that Black mothers (women in general) need to pay attention to 'the ancient properties' - which means that they should have the ability to be "the ship" and the "safe harbor."

The views of black womanhood and motherhood that she embeds in her fiction come from Morrison's many interviews and articles in which she has publicly articulated her ideas of motherhood. Morrison etches a fully developed theory of African American mothering that is

essential to her larger political and theoretical stance on black womanhood. Building upon black women's experiences of and perspectives on motherhood, Morrison builds up a view of black motherhood that is, in terms of both maternal identity and role, drastically dissimilar to motherhood experienced and established by the Eurocentric, white culture. The author is concerned with maternal tasks of preservation, nurturance, cultural bearing and protecting children from the damage of a racist and sexist culture, and with teaching children how to protect themselves so they may be empowered to survive and resist the racist and patriarchal culture in which they live and develop a strong and authentic identity as a black person.

Motherhood in Morrison's novels is overwhelmingly an act of resistance which is integral to black people, especially black women's fight against racism and sexism and their ability to achieve happiness for themselves and their culture. Building upon the African American maternal practices of nurturance as resistance and cultural bearing she argues that motherwork, through the tasks of preservation, nurturance, cultural bearing, and healing, is what makes survival and resistance possible for African American people. This very black motherhood becomes incomprehensible to the White feminist theory where motherhood is preeminently a private and apolitical enterprise and may be a means of continuing to subordinate women. Morrison sees African American mothering as empowerment for African American mothers themselves, for their children, and for the community. More specifically, Morrison takes traditional conceptions of black womanhood - the ancient properties - and traditional black values -the funk - and makes them central to her definition of motherhood as a site of power for black women.

Chapter II

Fatal Contractions: Intense Behavior in *The Bluest Eye* and *Sula*

This chapter will explore the theme of disconnection from and loss of the motherline in Morrison's first two novels, *The Bluest Eye* and *Sula*. In particular, it will examine how women become disconnected from their motherline through identification with typical gender ideologies. The women examined in this chapter, become disconnected from their motherline and disregard their ancient properties as a result of their internalization of a typical gender belief or behavior. It can be observed that Morrison is particularly troubled by normative gender ideologies, especially of those of female beauty, the family, motherlove and female fulfillment. These gender ideologies agonize Morrison precisely because they cause black women to shun the very values that would empower them, namely, the funk and ancient properties of the African American motherline. Morrison's fiction seeks to dismantle, destabilize and deconstruct these master narratives so as to enable black women to write scripts of family, beauty, motherlove and fulfillment in accordance with the teachings of the African American motherline.

The Bluest Eye

Motherhood in *The Bluest Eye* is hard work, a heavy load of economic and moral responsibility with few redeeming moments of tenderness or affection. Both of the mothers in this novel-Mrs. MacTeer and Pauline Breedlove-are supremely pragmatic in their motives toward their daughters. Theirs is a motherly love hardened by necessity; their first responsibility toward their daughters is to keep them alive, their second, to teach them to fend for themselves. The broader implications of fending for themselves are the ability to survive in a hostile world, to maintain personal integrity in the face of the dominant white culture, and to grow up to be

decent, acceptable citizens. But Pauline Breedlove is functioning on the fringes of society; in the white home where she is employed as domestic help, she is just that-the help. The little white girl she cares for has access to a nurturing, maternal side of Pauline that her own children never see to the extent Pecola calls her mother 'Mrs. Breedlove,' a frosty, distancing name that emphasizes the difficulty of this mother-child relationship, while the white girl calls her by an affectionate/demeaning first name. But while Pauline has a double identity as a mother, she has no support network within her own community-the Breedloves are accepted by no one. They live in white culture only as domestic help; in Black culture, as an example of what not to become, of sloth and laziness steeped in violence, poor taste, and alcohol. Pecola's mother has no community in whose ways she can train her daughter. In her inability to protect her daughter from her drunken husband, Mrs. Breedlove fails in her maternal duty; not only does Pecola get pregnant when her father rapes her, but when she miscarries, her tenuous hold on sanity is broken, and she is rendered forever incapable of attaining the status of decent, acceptable citizen. Mrs. MacTeer, on the other hand, is constantly aware of her responsibility toward Claudia and Frieda, ever vigilant that they might stray from the narrow path of moral decency and cultural acceptability that she believes will keep them safe in life. She is aware of her place in her social world, and is willing to sacrifice tenderness and mercy toward her daughters in order to ensure that they maintain that standing while surviving the delicate game of interfacing with the dominant white culture. They are taught to fear prostitutes, to despise laziness, and to scorn those who are outside of their culture's accepted margins. Even as she berates Claudia for an inconvenient illness, she nonetheless clearly loves her daughter, but has no emotional energy available for open demonstrations of that affection. Throughout this novel, emotional comfort is an unheard-of luxury in a world where survival is a daily struggle.

Sula

Different types of motherhood in *Sula* are discussed through the Peace women, Sula, Hannah and Eva, and the Wright women, Rochelle, Helene, and Nel. Morrison explores the intergenerational effects of maternal relationships. Eva Peace embodies matriarchy-holding court from her wagon-throne, never leaving her bedroom but ruling her little kingdom well within her divine right as mother and grandmother. Nel Wright, like Sula Peace, comes from a line of women fending for themselves; her mother, raised by her grandmother, has rejected her own mother's life of prostitution, instead embracing the virtue of the Catholic Church and life as a small-town pillar of decency. Like her mother, Nel chooses seemingly traditional life with a husband and children, but when her husband, Jude Greene, is seduced by Sula, Nel loses him as well as her lifelong best friend. In Eva, Morrison examines both the pragmatic and the affectionate sides of motherhood. When Eva's husband abandons her in the dead of winter, leaving her destitute with three children to feed, Eva has no choice but to rise to the occasion; we are never entirely sure what happened to her leg, but it is clear that the loss of that leg is what enables her to survive financially and raise her children to adulthood. But throughout the novel her single-minded insistence on survival is tempered by unabashed love for her children; Plum, particularly, is her acknowledged favorite. It can be said that Eva's murder of her grown son, when she discovers his opium addiction, foreshadows Sethe's refusal to allow her children to be destroyed by slavery in *Beloved* -Eva will end Plum's degradation herself, rather than allow him to kill himself with drugs. Eva's matriarchal dynasty is short-lived; her eldest daughter, Hannah, who lives with her, burns to death (with daughter Sula looking on); years later, Sula dies of a prolonged illness, pathetically alone, having institutionalized her grandmother and alienated everyone else in town who might care about her, particularly Nel. Sula leads a supremely

narcissistic life. She has no regard for anyone's feelings; she does exactly what she pleases, without thought for convention or public disapprobation. Her betrayals of the three most important women in her life (Nel, Eva, and Hannah) indicate her lack of balancing superego. But Nel's more traditional life choices don't shield her from the repercussions of Sula's selfishness; even after she loses her husband to Sula, Nel's sense of herself as peacemaker and protector prompts her to take responsibility, unbidden, for the ill Sula, as well as the dead Sula. Both women struggle throughout the novel to establish identities for themselves independent of their maternal lineage, but both ultimately fail; the complex dynamics of mother-child relationships are too strong, too much a part of who they are, for either of them ever to be totally divested of that inheritance.

Chapter III

Rocking the Cradle: Finding Mothers in *Song of Solomon* and *Tar Baby*

Morrison's reflection on re/disconnection to the motherline in *Song of Solomon* and *Tar Baby* both complicate and clarify her maternal philosophy. Both the novels narrate an individual's quest to reclaim ancient properties and ancient memories of African American motherline. This chapter emphasizes how mothers themselves seek to sustain the motherline and empower their children through maternal tasks of preservation, nurturance and cultural bearing. Black mothers are cultural bearers who model and mentor the ancient properties and the funk of the motherline. Likewise, black mothers, through both preservation and nurturance, seek to ensure the physical survival and psychological well-being of the children. As stated earlier, in each of these functions—cultural bearing, preservation and nurturance - mothering is represented in Morrison as a site of resistance, or more specifically an act of intervention against racist practices that cause injury to both the African American motherline and its people. Ruth in *Song of Solomon*, Margaret in *Tar Baby*, display problematic, and in the case of Margaret, abusive maternal behavior. In Morrison's fiction ineffectual or failed mothering signifies an act of resistance against patriarchy and in particular the patriarchal institution of motherhood. Mothers in Morrison, as they confront racism on behalf of their children, also challenge their own oppression in the patriarchal institution of motherhood. Patriarchal motherhood is oppressive to both white and black mothers but it is particularly harmful to black women because, as noted in chapter one, it prevents black women from fulfilling their essential cultural bearing function. Resistance to patriarchal motherhood is conveyed in the many instances of failed maternal rules and fractured relationships in Ruth's "deviant" maternal practices, in particular the "late" nursing of her son, and Margaret's abuse of her son Michael.

Song of Solomon

In *Song of Solomon*, Morrison creates a mother character who has achieved a level of financial and social security that affords her the luxury of a more complex and affection-based relationship with her children. As in Morrison's previous novels, the presence of an abusive husband complicates Ruth Dead's life; while Cholly Breedlove's decisive act is to rape his daughter, and Boy Boy chooses to leave Eva, Macon Dead just stays and torments his wife and children. Ruth's love for her son is her only act of open defiance against Macon; she tricked him into getting her pregnant a third time, years after he had lost all sexual interest in her, and then fought to keep the baby he wanted her to lose or abort. Milkman Dead's very existence is the hard evidence of Ruth's maternal instinct, and she turns to that relationship for what little validation and pleasure she can eke out of life. On the other side of town, Macon's sister, Pilate Dead, holds sway in a very different household; she raised her daughter, Reba, alone, and the two women have now raised Reba's daughter, Hagar, again without the benefit or burden of male input. Hagar grows up indulged and protected; Pilate is an eccentric, but strong and capable, woman, levelheaded and wise. Pilate and Reba both dote on Hagar, but she loses her heart to Milkman, and comes completely unhinged when he jilts her. Pilate and Macon both live their lives under the shadow of their adored father's death; as children, they witnessed his murder and found themselves alone in the world. The novel hinges on their struggle to truly understand and come to terms with what happened to him, and to themselves, on that farm in Pennsylvania; throughout, Pilate is driven by visits from her father's ghost, convinced that he is urging her to atone for her sins and honor his memory. Milkman pieces together a history of his grandparents that neither Macon nor Pilate knew, and reveals that the dead grandfather's visits were not about himself, but about his wife's memory; Macon, Sr., urges Pilate to honor her mother, which she

has never been able to do because her mother died a few minutes before Pilate's birth. *Song of Solomon* can be called a quest novel; for each character the quest takes a slightly different form, but for all it is about understanding, honoring, and justifying the past. For Pilate and Macon, and their respective families, the most elusive part of that past is the memory of their dead mother, Singing Bird.

Tar Baby

Tar Baby delineates Morrison's theory of mothering, and details how initiation into motherhood and perspectives on maternity enact and represent Morrison's maternal philosophy. *Tar Baby* details a woman's disconnection from her motherline; however, in this instance the woman, Jadine, is a daughter whose disconnection from the motherline results in an inability to achieve the authentic selfhood of black womanhood championed by Morrison. Jadine's disconnection from the motherline is occasioned by the death of her mother and results in her rejection of the ancient proprieties of black womanhood that would afford her an authentic selfhood. This story of disconnection and loss is enacted and signified through the female reproductive experience. Jadine's dread and loathing of motherhood, particularly as it is represented by the fecund maternal body depicts her disconnection and results in her sense of inauthenticity and incompleteness. *Tar Baby* tells the story of Jadine's quest for wholeness and its eventual failure. It is because of her rejection of the very cultural constructions of race and mothering that could heal her and transform her consciousness. The novel opens with Morrison's dedication to her foremothers. One enters the text through this dedication and it acts as our moral point of reference for our interpretation and judgment of the novel. The phrase "ancient properties" frames the novel- it occurs in the dedication and it is mentioned on the penultimate page of the novel. Morrison's novels detail a particular way of being modeled on the ancient

ways and values of the foremothers and positions the motherline as the way by which the ancient path is followed and passed on generationally. Connecting to the motherline, a young black woman learns and claims for herself the ancient properties of her foremothers. The ancient properties are at the core of black women's empowerment. The women of the ancient properties are the ones who both embody and carry that ancestral memory; they are the cultural bearers and the cultural translators. Jadine, rejects the ancient properties of traditional black womanhood and adopts the values of the dominant white culture. This rejection causes psychic fragmentation, or a divided consciousness.

Tar Baby is often read as a celebration of the ancestor figure. While *Tar Baby* does indeed celebrate the ancestor through the notion of "daughterhood," the novel is a cautionary tale about heritage and women's public identity in more ways than one. To that end, this novel contends that not only does the novel indict imperialism and Eurocentrism as detrimental to black women's lives; it also illuminates both the possibilities and the pitfalls of romanticizing heritage through the novel's ongoing tensions between personal autonomy and familial duty for women in particular. *Tar Baby* enacts and affirms Morrison's theory of the empowerment of women through the motherline by detailing the tragedies of disconnection. Jadine shuns that which would give meaning to her life. In and through Jadine's repudiation of motherhood and motherline, Morrison affirms her centrality to black women's politics of empowerment. In her words, "a woman has to be a daughter before she can be any kind of woman."

Chapter IV

Maternal Ambivalence: Ferocious Maternal Resistance in *Beloved*

The aim of black mothering, once preservation has been ensured, is to nurture children so that they may transcend the maiming of racism and grow into adulthood whole and complete. Black women immunize their children from racist ideologies by raising them in accordance with the values – the funk and ancient properties – of the African American motherline and by loving them so that they may love themselves in a culture that defines them as not deserving or worthy of love. Morrison makes it a point to show how mothers through maternal nurturance protect their children from the emotional hurts of racism and how they heal these wounds once inflicted. While her two more recent novels are concerned with healing, Morrison's fifth novel, *Beloved* considers how mothers through the maternal task of nurturance challenge the cultural denial and disparagement of black motherlove. In *Beloved*, maternal nurturance is situated as a political act that seeks to define two different, although intersecting ideologies: the first been black children as non subjects and the second defines slave mothers as breeders and so not mothers. This chapter will explore how Sethe claims a maternal subjectivity in defiance of the construction of slave mothers as breeders, in order to instill in her children a loved sense of self so that they may be subjects in a culture that commodifies them as objects. Sethe's interpretation of her motherlove as resistance will be contrasted to Paul D.'s and the critics' view that Sethe's love is indeed "too thick."

Morrison establishes child murder as the ultimate form of mother violence, exposing the complexities of the mothering construct in terms of creation and destruction. By not only deciding on death for their progeny but also performing the murder themselves, black women

assert their motherhood over societal mores. By choosing death for their children, these mothers claim their motherhood in ways that are challenging to understand- yet, in doing so, these female characters achieve astonishingly powerful personas.

African American slave women practiced sexual abstinence, abortion, and infanticide as strategies of resistance, exemplifying their refusal to participate in and help perpetuate a system that treated their bodies and their children's bodies as property.

In *Beloved*, Morrison creates her most complex portrayal of motherhood; even the novel's title is a testament to Sethe's dubious legacy of love and blood. Having escaped from slavery at great personal cost, when Sethe sees her owner and tormentor coming to recapture her and her children, she attempts to kill her children to keep them from having to live through the cruelty that she has experienced at schoolteacher's*hands. She succeeds only in killing her toddler daughter, and schoolteacher is sufficiently horrified that he abandons his mission. Throughout the novel, Sethe's mothering is intertwined with her memories of her own mother, who was separated from her by the cruelties of slavery, and with the mothering and memories of her mother-in-law, Baby Suggs. The ghost of Beloved, who appears as the flesh-and-blood incarnation of Sethe's traumatized psyche, is also an amalgam of generations of African and maternal suffering under the inhumanity of the slave trade. The novel revolves around Sethe's accommodation of first the invisible baby ghost, and later the physical girl who appears, Beloved's ghost returned to life. When faced with the person that her beloved daughter could have been, Sethe relinquishes her own right to endure and live, and her obligation to mother her remaining child. Sethe's entire identity is a part of, and a reaction to, her mothering, and the reality of motherhood in the face of life's injustices threatens to annihilate her.

Sethe has four children, but her sons, Howard and Buglar Suggs, pick up and leave early in the novel, unable to cope with the intensity of the ghost-child who haunts their home; significantly, the result of their departure is a truly matriarchal family unit. When Baby Suggs dies, Sethe is left alone to support the weight of her past, her grief, her ancestral legacy, and her adolescent daughter's needs. Paul D Garner, the last of the men with whom she survived the atrocities on the plantation, reappears and attempts to support and nurture Sethe, but his arrival only complicates the relationships between the mother and her two daughters, one living, one not. Sethe's ultimate catharsis, the exorcism of Beloved's human ghost, can be accomplished only by the women of the town, when they come out to support Sethe at Denver Suggs's behest. Symbolically, Sethe is unable to support the weight of her motherhood alone; yet again Morrison is pointing out, among other things, the importance of community-based mothering. The novel is ultimately homage to the strength of women everywhere who, collectively, enable the world's children to live and thrive and, by extension, sustain the very existence of humanity, no matter what the exigencies of life and survival.

Chapter V

Ties that Bind: Maternal Power and Loss in *Jazz* and *Paradise*

Morrison's renditions of motherhood are truly horrifying: a son burnt to death; a baby whose throat is slit; children who are abused, abandoned, beaten , and neglected by their mothers- these harrowing events permeate all seven of her novels. The last chapter considered how these violations may be read as gestures of nurturance and preservation and in particular, as maternal acts of resistance against a white supremacist and patriarchal culture. Motherwork, in Morrison's first five novels is represented as act of preventions insofar as mothers, through preservation, nurturance and cultural bearing, seek to empower children to survive and resist. With her *Jazz* and *Paradise*, Morrison's concern becomes how to heal these wounds once inflicted. *Songs of Solomon* and *Tar Baby* narrate an individual's quest to reclaim the ancient properties and ancestral memory of African American motherline; with Morrison's *Jazz* and *Paradise* the emphasis is upon the reclamation of the lost selfhood of the unmothered child. This chapter will explore how Violet and Joe in *Jazz* and the convent women in *Paradise* are healed when they remember the mother, mourn her loss, reconnect with her, and recreate for themselves an identity as a mothered child. This psychic journey of return, reconnection and reclamation, while directed to the spirit of lost mother, is initiated and overseen by an actual mother figure.

Jazz

The raw emotional force of Morrison's meticulously crafted novels rests in their focus on loss and longing. And what could be more emotionally powerful than the longings for and of mothers, what Morrison calls in *Jazz* "mother-hunger"? That this loss and longing

is profoundly shaped by large socio-historical forces of virulent American racism, sexism, and classism makes the stories of Sethe and Beloved, Pauline and Pecola, Wild and Joe, Rose Dear and Violet all the more personally poignant.

Jazz, tells the story of unmothered children who never take the journey from mother-love to self-love, and thus never come to know their own selves. The novel emphasizes how essential mothering is for the emotional well-being of children. The children in *Jazz* are orphaned, abandoned, and denied nurturant mothering; as adults, they are psychologically wounded. The loss of the mother for Violet and Joe fractures and displaces their developing selfhood; only when they mourn the loss of their mothers and reconnect with them is recovery of their child selfhood made possible. *Jazz* is thus a story about the wounding and healing of the unmothered children.

Two of the primary driving forces of the novel stem from motherhood unfulfilled: Violet Trace's inability to become a mother, coupled with the memory of her own mother's suicide, and Joe Trace's inability ever to know his mother. As in Morrison's other novels, an understanding of the present is always an exercise in untangling the knotted threads of history, and in this novel we see an entire cast of characters attempting to compensate for their lack of an enduring sense of being rooted in a stable network of maternal relationships. Neither Violet nor Joe can find comfort in a mother or a child; this lack of lineage forces them to find other ways of coping with life's challenges. Violet has few, if any, resources. She is mentally unstable, and ultimately her marriage provides the safety net that keeps her sane and functional. Joe is clearly searching for a mother figure; the image of his whispering to a wild woman in a cornfield, hoping she is his mother, frames the book. Dorcas Manfred, Joe's lover, is more a child than a mother figure, and cannot really meet his psychological

needs. In the final scenes of the novel, it is their shared history that enables the Traces to hold their marriage together-each is lacking a matriarchal lineage, so they create their own history, marital rather than maternal. Clearly, in this particular novel, the characters' lack of stability, of rootedness, represents the sense of disorder that plagued the Jazz Age culture as a whole; motherhood, or the lack thereof, becomes an allegory for a much larger cultural condition.

Paradise

The aim here is to situate Morrison's seventh novel *Paradise* in her maternal philosophy and politic as it has been developed in her novels. Morrison argues that the 'ancient properties' of traditional black womanhood, carried along the motherline and assumed by each generation of women, are at the core of black women's empowerment. The ancient properties of black womanhood also position mothers as the cultural bearers who, in their connection with African American culture and history, serve as ambassadors for their people, bringing the past to the present and keeping African American culture in the community of black people. Morrison thus places mother-love, along with the ancient properties (and the funk), at the centre of black resistance and emancipation.

Paradise is primarily concerned with two neighboring communities: the town of Ruby and a decaying mansion seventeen miles north known as the Convent. Ruby is an exclusively all-black town in Oklahoma, created in 1949 by fifteen families of African Americans whose ancestors have been in America since the mid-eighteenth century and who have had a long history since struggling to protect their freedom, including being rejected by other black townships they had wished to join. A motley group of women who live at the

Convent represent a matriarchal rejection of the patriarchal "paradise" of Ruby. As the women take refuge in the convent, they nurture and sustain one another. The convent itself signifies maternal nurturance; kitchens, and cooking, both metaphorically and literally central to the convent, represent in Morrison fiction care and healing. It is this insubordination that brings down upon them the wrath of the town's male old guard, and though the town's wise woman (poignantly named Lone DuPres in honor of her discovery as an abandoned/motherless infant in the wilderness) tries to save them, she is too late, and the women are sacrificed. The symbolic leader of the Convent is a woman whom Consolata (Connie) Sosa (the oldest resident, and mother figure to the women who gravitate there) calls Mother (Mary Magna); she is actually an ill and aged nun who dies early in the novel. The Convent actually was, at one time, a community of nuns running a school for Native American girls; it gradually becomes a shelter for various lost and hunted women who struggle to heal their wounds and nurture each other in an entirely female environment. For almost every one of the women at the Convent, motherhood is the background on which emotional battles are waged: for one, it is the accidental suffocation of her twin babies that fuels her escape from an abusive husband; another runs away from home when her boyfriend falls in love with her mother, and later gets pregnant, most likely after being raped. Another was just a child when her mother, whom she thought was her sister, walked out of their apartment and never returned. For all these women, the distinction between mother and daughter is unclear; the line between self/identity and mother love is blurred. Each is unable to create order from her own emotional chaos, but with Connie's help, the women support each other in their journeys toward wholeness and independence. By contrast, in the town of Ruby (even the name has maternal significance), Black women have

achieved the ironically incapacitating status of the white ideal of subordinate, subservient motherhood: they have no voice, no independent thought, no power. When any one of the women needs a truly supportive female community, she finds that community at the Convent. At the end of the novel, it is the women of the town who try to prevent the massacre of the Convent women, and it is the town's marginal women, Patricia Best Cato (daughter of an outside woman) and Lone DuPres, who are able to look objectively at this piece of Ruby history and understand the male pride and arrogance that led to such senseless cruelty.

Chapter VI

Ain't That Love?:The Mother Knot in *Love* and *A Mercy*

With *Love* it would seem that indeed the topic of motherhood is no longer integral to Morrison's social or literary imagination. However, building upon Morrison maternal theory that is examined these silences and absence need to be read metaphorically, signifying, the importance of motherhood. The absence of fictional renditions of Morrison's maternal theory affirms and confirms the truth and significance of Morrison's maternal theory. Morrison demonstrates the importance of this motherwork by describing the devastation, both personal and cultural that arises when children are not preserved, nurtured, or do not receive cultural bearing. The absence therefore bespeak not a failure of the vision; rather they signify a narrative strategy- one that seeks to stress the crucial importance of mothering by showing the loss and suffering that occurs in its absence. Motherless and unmothered children may also be found in *Love*.

On the other hand maternal abandonment, either literal or emotional, is also a common manifestation in Morrison's texts. Regardless of whether the abandonment is intentional or desired, the child perception of being abandoned often drives the child to act out violently. Disturbing the development of necessary community-based sentiments, such as empathy or social identification, the mother violence creates children (and subsequently adults) who feel detached from others in their community, allowing the twisted familial violence to be perpetuated. Home, then, becomes a place to learn pain, while community becomes a place to act it out. Many of Morrison's characters learn about violence within a matrilineal home setting. Most female characters in Morrison's *A Mercy* pertain to motherhood in some way- some are mothers, some were mothers, some act as mothers, some long for mothers. Indeed, motherhood

is so much at the core of this novel that the concept of the mother can be considered a character itself.

Love

Unlike her previous seven novels in which mothers are central characters, and in which motherwork and motherlove are integral to both plot and theme, there are few mother characters in *Love* and few descriptions of, or reflections upon, the experience and/or meaning of mothering. As Morrison states in her Foreword of *Love* Heed, Christine, and Junior have been deprived of mothering (and fathering). The three women were largely deprived of a relationship with their mothers, and the relationships they did have with their mothers were often riddled with irresponsibility and misguided motivations. Instead of forming strong maternal bonds in their developmental years, each girl was pushed to value herself in terms of a paternal figure. The novel provides a strong example of Morrison's examination of female African American characters failing to overcome oppression because their identities are inextricably bound within the systems that oppress them.

What strikes ones most about *Love* is the absence of mothers and mothering. Heed, Christine, and Junior struggle with one another in response to a patriarchal arrangement of power. Deprived of parenting with inept mothers, each woman turns to Bill Cosey as a paternal figure. In case of the three women their relationships with their parents are less than ideal, and in some cases, nonexistent. Search for validation from a paternal figure results from the absence of a mothering force.

The only mother in the novel, May, feels helpless and desperate in front of an imposing and over-towering father-in-law, the hotelier, Bill Cosey who marries his granddaughter

Christine's eleven year old friend – Heed. To keep her away from a house, May sends Christine away to a boarding-school and arranges to send her to friends' houses for vacations. Nevertheless, May keeps trying to guide and warn her daughter, through her incoherent letters, of the impending danger. When, finally Christine returns at the age of sixteen she is not accepted. Unlettered Heed humiliated by suave and sophisticated Christine, burns her bed. Concerned about her daughter's safety, the otherwise timid, May, for once confronts her high and mighty father-in-law and suggests that his low born wife, be sent away. Bill Cosey's answer sealed the fate of Christine and her mother stands helplessly by, as she sees her daughter being ousted from her rightful home. Junior's mother too, tries in vain to protect her daughter from bullying uncles who ultimately run the wheels of their truck, over her foot, crippling her for life.

Mother figures or community mothers take to the fore where natural mothers are either absent or fail. Romen is not anchorless inspite of being motherless. Romen's mother is in the army and father is in the merchant Marine. Roman is left to the care of his maternal grandparents Vida and Sandler Gibbons, who take good care of him. Christine whose mother weans her when she is 3 months and whose father dies while she is still a 5 yr old toddler, finds a mother-figure in L. Practically motherless, Christine and motherless Heed, cling to each other in an attempt to mother each other. They seek in one another, what they fail to find in their mothers. *Love* displays apparent similarities with *Sula*, as it relates the story of a friendship between two girls. Christine and Heed, like Nel and Sula, become close friends when small, and both relationships, however painful, is to last their whole life. Both friendships are ruined as Sula and Nel's friendship turns cold, the relationship between Heed and Christine becomes ridden with jealousy, betrayal and hatred before reconciliation.

For Morrison, mothering is concerned with how mothers, raising black children in a racist and sexist world, can best protect their children, instruct them in how to protect themselves, challenge racism, and for daughters, the sexism that seeks to harm them. Heed, Christine, and Junior have mothers who have failed to instruct their children, abandoning them to societal constraints and forcing them to seek independence without proper instruction. Thus, each woman gains her sense of self through reflecting the roles prescribed to her by society, instead of reflecting an empowered sense of self that is the ultimate goal of mothering.

A Mercy

A Mercy challenges the notion that all black women are inherently good and nurturing mothers even if such a concept is possible. Unlike its predecessors, *Paradise* and *Love, A Mercy* can be referred to as a prequel to Morrison's masterpiece *Beloved*. To illustrate the peculiarities of motherhood during slavery, the relationship between a young slave girl Florens and her mother is explored. A good mother chooses to send away her young enslaved daughter, in the hope of preventing her daughter from being sexually abused. Maternal emotional abandonment changes children in unfavorable ways, causing them to inflict violence on others. So, without acknowledgment the reasoning for this choice, the daughter internalizes what she perceives her mother's emotional and physical abandonment, eventually erupting more violence against a future rival. Later in the novel, however, the mother has the chance and the means to tell her story and explain her actions and beliefs. This becomes possible as the story is narrated by her in first person, creating the opportunity for a black mother to have voice to show her perspective. She tells the story from her viewpoint speaking directly to her daughter. Such acts, which apparently appear in opposition to a true feeling of love and mother care, ultimately represent the scarce options these mothers have to create a happier more decent life for their female offspring.

They entail acts of a profound love, deeper than the love for oneself. The tragedy, of course, is that Florens's mother was trying to save her daughter (and likewise her lover was simply being kind to an abandoned boy), but, without that crucial piece of information from her enslaved mother, Florens does not learn to navigate relationships or learn to trust—and so the innocent and self-martyring act of rescue from the mother becomes also an act of violence, setting in motion her daughter's future brutality and ultimate self-destruction.

Chapter VII

Invisible Presence: Maternal Voice and the Construction of Mother-Son Relationships

This chapter calls attention to the subject of black mother-son relationships. By looking at the novels of Morrison, the chapter attempts to discuss mother-son relationships and the role of the family in her works, and to situate her within the tradition of African American writers whose literary imaginations have been informed by mother-son relationships. Also the chapter will attempt to show how black mothers fared in rearing black sons. The endeavor would also be to eradicate the myth of the black matriarch. It is important to understand that Morrison does not have any hidden agendas. Nor does she have any particular loyalties to any group -feminism or Black Aestheticism- that might influence her characterization of black mothers and sons. The only loyalty that one can think of, perhaps, is her commitment to revealing the true nature, the humanity, of individuals-mothers and sons, men and women, blacks and whites.

Black mother-son relationships have pervaded the literary works of African American writers since the slave narratives and continue to do so today. However, very little scholarship exists on the subject of black mother-son relationships. Although Morrison insists that her works are not autobiographical, her works reveals that her gender and her experience shape her portrayals of mother-son relationships. Morrison, who has been a single mother is aware of the difficulties and challenges of motherhood for black women, refuses to subscribe to the good mother versus bad mother dichotomy when portraying her mother figures. Some of her mothers succeed and others fail, but they are all flawed in some way. Morrison's has been accused of portraying black men in a negative light. Her detractors find much to complain about the negative portrayals of black men as violent and insensitive brutes. It might at first appear that

there is truth in her detractors' claims. For instance, in *The Bluest Eye*, Samson Fuller abandons his pregnant girlfriend. Their son, Cholly, inherits his father's irresponsible nature and runs away from home when he fears that he may have impregnated Darlene. Years later, Cholly commits a most horrendous crime when he rapes his nine-year-old daughter, Pecola. *Sula* also depicts black male characters as irresponsible and unsteady. BoyBoy, Eva's husband abandons her leaving her to rear three children. Jude also abandons his wife, Nel, and their three children after he is caught engaging in sexual intercourse with her best friend, Sula. Macon Dead in *Song of Solomon* does not abandon his family. However, he is both verbally and physically abusive towards Ruth, and his hatred and disdain for his wife and children. In *Tar Baby*, Son kills his wife in a jealous rage after he catches her in bed with another man. In *Beloved*, Sethe learns the hard way what Baby Suggs constantly preached – that men are not dependable. Paul D encourages Sethe to confide in him and then criticizes and abandons her after she does. In *Jazz*, Joe Trace stalks and then murders Dorcas, the teenage girl with whom he entered into an adulterous affair. *Paradise* opens with nine of the men from Ruby going out to the convent and, in cold blood, gunning down the five unarmed women who reside there. While these portrayals of black men are certainly unflattering, it is somewhat unfair and one-sided to accuse Morrison of male bashing, for her depictions of women are often unflattering as well. Her women characters prove to be equally adept as the male characters at being verbally and physically abusive, abandoning familial responsibilities, and committing murder. One needs look no further than Morrison's portrayals of son figures to disprove her critics' claims that she is guilty of male bashing.

Chapter VIII

The Ship *and* the Safe Harbor: Thinking Maternal

Throughout her novels, Morrison dissects, examines, and re-examines the archetypal images of motherhood, ruthlessly challenging traditional definitions of mothering. She examines the intergenerational impact on the human psyche of motherhood as both a presence and an absence. Writing out of a tradition in which mothers are the keepers of history-the oral tradition and the ancient properties-Morrison inextricably links the mother's role with the role of history. To lose, or dishonor, or ignore one is to lose the other. And these are the primal relationships of humanity. We are nothing outside of history; likewise, without mothers, we would not exist.

Motherhood is a profoundly public and political enterprise as far as Morrison is concerned. Black mothering centers on what Morrison calls the ancient properties of traditional black womanhood. Black women are regarded as providers and nurturers. They are both "ship and safe harbor, inn and trail" as famously said by Morrison.

Mothering as resistance -whether to be conveyed against white supremacy or patriarchal motherhood -challenges the normative discourse of motherhood that configures mothering as simply and solely private and emotional. Motherhood in the dominant culture has frequently been regarded as the cause of women's oppression in patriarchal culture. Mothers are understood to be powerless and disempowered. In contrast, African American motherhood allows mothers to develop a belief in their own empowerment while providing a base for self actualization. Building upon this theme, Morrison developed the maternal standpoint of black mothers as ship and harbor, inn and trail, a standpoint that defines motherhood as a site of power for black women. From this position, black women seek to empower their children.

The mothers and mother like characters, mostly flawed but also all attempting to manage situations far beyond their control, choose violence. In doing so, they transform from powerless subordinates into dominating forces, even though that transformation often has multidimensional repercussions for them and those with whom they have chosen to be violent. As young girls, mothers, and grandmothers, they act in unsanctioned ways, forcing a redefinition of what black femaleness and black motherhood can and should be, especially under oppressive conditions. Through multiple generations of violent patterns (reflecting the viciousness of racist society around them), children learn violence and become violent themselves, and violent mothers may find themselves unmothered by murdering their own children, depicting a repetitive ghastliness within Morrison families. And yet these female characters remain powerful, dominant, and intriguing. They face horrendously oppressive circumstances and create new endings to them, which their oppressors can hardly believe. They redirect their powerless positions, transforming themselves into hauntingly forceful girls and women. They choose their own destinies, even if those futures are often lonely or tragic. Thus, these violent females provide a new understanding of violence and its relationship to personal power and community.

Black mother characters within Morrison's novels are often scarred-physically and/or emotionally-by the oppressive environments around them. Racially exploited, sexually violated, and often emotionally humiliated for years or decades, these women often learn to coexist with their visible and invisible scars by making choices that are not easily understood. Specifically, many of Morrison's mothers/female characters turn to violence-sometimes verbal but more frequently physical-and, in doing so, attempt to create unique solutions to avoid further victimization. This process demonstrates the ways in which violence itself can become an act of rebellion, a form of resistance to oppressive power.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Morrison, Toni. *The Bluest Eye*. New York: Washington Square Press, 1972. Print.

----**.** *Sula*. New York: Plume, 1982. Print.

----. *Song of Solomon*. New York: Knopf, 1977. Print.

----.*Tar Baby*. Novel. New York: Plume, 1981. Print.

----**.** *Beloved*. New York: Knopf, 1987. Print.

----**.** *Jazz.* London: Picador, 1993. Print.

----**.** *Paradise.* New York: Knopf, 1997. Print.

----**.** Love. New York: Knopf, 2003. Print.

----**.** *A Mercy*. New York: Knopf, 2008. Print.

Secondary Sources

Abbey, Sharon, and Andrea O' Reilly. *Redefining Motherhood: Changing Identities and Patterns*. Toronto: Second Story, 1998. Print.

Badinter, Elizabeth. *Motherlove: Myth and Reality*. New York: Macmillan, 1981. Print.

Badt, Karin Luisa. "The Roots of the Body in Toni Morrison: A Mater of 'Ancient Properties.'" *African American Review* 29.4 (1995): 567-77. Print.

Baker, Houston A., Jr. *Blues, Ideology, and Afro-American Literature: A Vernacular Theory*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1984.Print.

Bell, Bernard W. "*Beloved*: A Womanist Neo-Slave Narrative; or Multivocal Remembrances of Things Past.' *African American Review* 26, 1 (Spring) 1992: 7-15. Print.

Bell-Scott, Patricia et al., eds. *Double Stitch: Black Women Write About Mothers and Daughters*. Boston: Beacon, 1993. Print.

Bernard, Jessie. *The Future of Motherhood*. New York: Dial, 1974. Print

Bjork, Patrick Bryce. *The Novels of Toni Morrison: The Search for Self and Place Within the Community*. New York: Peter Lang, 1994. Print.

Bloom, Harold, ed. *Toni Morrison*. Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 1990. Print.

Butler-Evans, Elliott. *Race, Gender, and Desire: Narrative Strategies in the Fiction of Toni Cade Bambara, Toni Morrison, and Alice Walker*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989. Print.

Byerman, Keith E. *Fingering the Jagged Edge: Tradition and Form in Recent Black Fiction*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1985. Print.

Carby, Hazel V. *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro- American Woman Novelist.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1987. Print

Carmean, Karen. *Toni Morrison's World of Fiction*. New York: The Whitson Publishing Company, 1993. Print.

Chodorow, Nancy. "The Psychodynamics of the Family." *The Second Wave: A Reader in Feminist Theory*, Ed. Linda Nicholson. New York: Routledge, 1997. Print.

Christian, Barbara. *Black Feminist Criticism: Perspectives on Black Women Writers*. New York: Pergamon Press, 1985. Print.

----. *Black Women Novelists: The Development of a Tradition, 1892-1976*. Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1980. Print.

Collins, Patricia Hill. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. New York: Routledge. 2000. Print.

----. "Shifting the Center: Race, Class, and Feminist Theorizing about Motherhood." *Mothering: Ideology, Experience and Agency*, Ed. Evelyn Nakano Glenn, Grace Chang, and Linda Forcey. New York: Routledge, 1994. 45-65. Print.

Daly, Brenda O. and Maureen T. Reddy, eds. *Narrating Mothers: Theorizing Maternal Subjectivities*. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1991. Print.

Dance, Daryl C. "Black Eve or Madonna? A Study of the Antithetical Views of the Mother in Black American Literature." *Sturdy Black Bridges: Voices of Black Women in Literature*.

Eds. Roseann P. Bell and Bettye J. Parker. New York: Anchor Books, 1979. 123-32. Print.

David, Ron. *Toni Morrison Explained: A Reader's Road Map to the Novels*. New York: Random House, 2000. Print.

Davies, Carole Boyce. *Black Women, Writing, and Identity: Migration of the Subject*. London: Routledge, 1994. Print.

----. "Mother Right/Write Revisited: *Beloved* and *Dessa Rose* and the Construction of Motherhood in Black Women's Fiction." *Narrating Mothers: Theorizing Maternal Subjectivities*, Ed. Brenda O. Daly and Maureen T. Reddy .Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991. Print.

Denard, Carolyn C, ed. *Toni Morrison: Conversations*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2008. Print.

Doyle, Laura. Bordering on the Body: The Racial Matrix of Modern Fiction and Culture. New York: Oxford UP, 1994. Print.

Eastman, P. D. *Are You My Mother*? New York: Random House, 1960. Print.

Evans, Mari, ed. *Black Women Writers (1950-1980): A Critical Evaluation*. New York: Anchor-Doubleday, 1984. Print.

Frazier, E. Franklin. *The Negro Family in the United States*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966. Print.

Furman, Jan. *Toni Morrison's Fiction*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996. Print

Gates, Henry Louis, Jr. *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism*. New York: Oxford UP, 1988. Print.

Gates, Henry Louis, Jr., and Cornel West, eds. *The African-American Century: How Black Americans Have Shaped Our Country*. New York: Free Press, 2000. Print.

Gates, Henry Louis, Jr., and K. A. Appiah, eds. *Toni Morrison: Critical Perspectives Past and Present*. New York: Amistad, 1993. Print.

Gates, Henry Louis, Jr., and Nellie Y. McKay, Ed. *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1997. Print.

Glenn, Evelyn Nakano. "Social Constructions of Mothering: A Thematic Overview." *Mothering: Ideology, Experience, and Agency*. Ed. Evelyn Nakano Glenn, Grace Chang, and Linda Rennie Forcey. New York: Routledge, 1994. 1-32. Print.

Harris, Trudier. *Fiction and Folklore: The Novels of Toni Morrison*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991. Print.

Henderson, Mae Gwendolyn. "Toni Morrison's Beloved: Re -Membering the Body as Historical Text." *Comparative American Identities: Race, Sex and Nationality in The Modern Text*. Ed. Hortense J. Spillers. New York: Routledge, 1991. 62 - 86. Print.

Hirsch, Marianne. "Maternity and Rememory: Toni Morrison's Beloved." Representations of Motherhood. Ed. Donna Bassin, Margaret Honey and Meryle Mahrer Kaplan. New Haven: Yale UP, 1994. 92 – 110. Print.

----. The Mother / Daughter Plot: Narrative, Psychoanalysis, Feminism Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1989. Print.

Holloway, Karla F C., and Stephanie A. Demetrakopoulos. *New Dimensions of Spirituality: A Biracial and Bicultural Reading of the Novels of Toni Morrison*. New York: Greenwood, 1987. Print.

Horvitz, Deborah. Nameless Ghosts: Possession and Dispossession in *Beloved*. *Studies in American Fiction*, Vol. 17, No. 2, Autumn, 1989. 157-67. Print.

Houston, Pam. "The Truest Eye." *O: The Oprah Magazine* 1 Nov. 2003: 3-4. Print.

Kaplan, Ann. *Motherhood and Representation: The Mother in Popular Culture and Melodrama.* New York: Routledge, 1992. Print

Kaplan, Meryle Mahrer. *Mothers' Images of Motherhood*. New York: Routledge, 1992.Print

King, Joyce Elaine and Carolyn Ann Mitchell. *Black Mothers to Sons: Juxtaposing African American Literature with Social Practice*. New York: Peter Lang, 1990. Print.

Kitts, Lenore. "Toni Morrison and 'Sis Joe': The Musical Heritage of Paul D." *Modern Fiction Studies* 52.2 (2006): 495-523. Print.

Koenan, Anne. "The One Out of Sequence." Taylor-Guthrie, Danille, ed. *Conversations with Toni Morrison*. Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1994. 67-83. Print.

Kubitschek, Dehn. *Toni Morrison: A Critical Companion*. Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1998. Print.

Ladner, Joyce A. *Tomorrow's Tomorrow: The Black Woman*. Lincoln: NE. University of Nebraska Press. 1995. Print.

Margolis, Maxine. *Mothers and Such: Views of American Women and Why They Changed*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984. Print.

Matus, Jill. *Toni Morrison*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1998. Print.

Matus, Jill. *Toni Morrison*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1998. Print.

Mbalia, Doreatha Drummond. *Toni Morrison's Developing Class Consciousness*. Selinsgrove: Susquenhanna Press, 1991. Print.

McKay, Nellie Y, ed. *Critical Essays on Toni Morrison*. Boston, Massachusetts: G.K. Hall & Co., 1988. Print.

McMahon, Martha. *Engendering Motherhood: Identity and Self-Transformation in Women's lives*. New York: Guilford Press, 1995. Print.

McMillen, Sally G. *Motherhood in the Old South: Pregnancy, Childbirth and Infant Rearing*. Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1990. Print.

Morrison, Toni. "Rootedness: The Ancestor as Foundation." *Black Women Writers* (1950-1980): *A Critical Evaluation*. Ed. Mari Evans. New York: Doubleday, 1984. 339-345. Print.

----. "The Site of Memory", *Inventing the Truth: The Art and Craft of Memoir*, Ed. William Zinsser, Rev. Boston: Houghton Mifflin 1995. 103-124.Print.

----. *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992. Print.

Morton, Patricia. ed., *Discovering the Women in Slavery: Emancipating Perspectives on the American Past.* London: University of George Press, 1996. Print.

Moyers, Bill. "A Conversation with Toni Morrison." Taylor-Guthrie, Danille, ed. *Conversations with Toni Morrison*. Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1994. 262–274. Print.

Opoku, Kofe Asare. *Hidden Wholeness: An African American Spirituality for Individuals and Communities*. Ed. Michael N Dash, Jonathan Jackson, and Stephen C. Rasor. Cleveland: United Church Press.1997. Print.

Otten, Terry. *The Crime of Innocence in the Fiction of Toni Morrison*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1989. Print.

Page, Philip. *Dangerous Freedom: Fusion and Fragmentation in Toni Morrison's Novels*. Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1995. Print.

Patton, Venetria K. *Women in Chains: the Legacy of Slavery in Black Women's Fiction*. New York: State University of New York Press, 2000. Print.

Peach, Linden. *Toni Morrison*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998. Print.

Peach, Linden. *Toni Morrison*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997. Print.

Peterson, Nancy J, ed. *Toni Morrison: Critical and Theoretical Approaches*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins, 1997.

Peterson, Nancy J. "Introduction: On Incendiary Art, the Moral Imagination, and Toni Morrison." *Modern Fiction Studies* 52.2 (2006): 261-69. Print.

Phelan, Peggy. *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*. London: Routledge, 1993. Print.

Powell, Carolyn F. "In Remembrance of Mira: Reflections on the Death of a Slave Woman." *Discovering the Women in Slavery: Emancipating Perspectives on the American Past, Ed.* Patricia Morton. London: University of Georgia Press, 1996. Print.

Pratt, Annis. *Archetypal Patterns of Women's Fiction*. Brighton, England: Harvester, 1982. Print

Reinhardt, Mark. "Who Speaks for Margaret Garner? Slavery, Silence, and the Politics of Ventriloquism." *Critical Inquiry* 29, no. 1 (Autumn 2002): 81-119. Print.

Rich, Adrienne. *On Lies, Secrets, and Silence*. New York: W.W Norton, 1979. Print.

Rigney, Barbara Hill. *The Voices of Tony Morrison*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1991. Print.

Rothman, Barbara Katz. *Recreating Motherhood: Ideology and Technology in a Patriarchal Society*. New York: W.W Norton, 1989. Print.

Ruas, Charles. *Conversations with American Writers*. New York: Knopf, 1985. Print.

Samuels Wilfred D., Hudson-Weems Clenora. *Toni Morrison*. Boston: Massachusetts. Twayne Publishers. 1990. Print.

Scheiber, Andrew. "*Jazz* and the Future Blues: Toni Morrison's Urban Folk Zone." *Modern Fiction Studies* 52.2 (2006): 470-94. Print.

Taylor-Guthrie, Danille, ed. *Conversations with Toni Morrison*. Jackson: University of Mississippi, 1994. Print.

Tune, Anneruth. *The Politics of Motherhood*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1989. Print.

Wade-Gayles, Gloria. *No Crystal Stair: Visions of Race and Sex in Black Women's Fiction*. New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1984. Print.

Walker Alice. *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983. Print.

Walters, Wendy W. "'One of Dese Mornings, Bright and Fair, Take My Wings and Cleave de Air': The Legend of the Flying Africans and Diasporic Consciousness." *MELUS* 22.3 (Fall 1997): 3-29. Print.

Wearing Betsy. *The Ideology of Motherhood*. Sydney: George Allan and Unwin, 1984. Print

Weisenburger, Steven. *Modern Medea: A Family Story of Slavery and Child-Murder from the Old South*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1998. Print.

West, Cornel, and Toni Morrison. "Blues, Love, and Politics." *The Nation* 24 May 2004. Print.

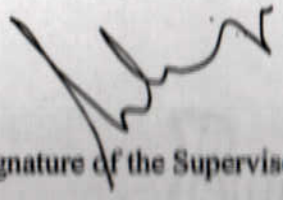
Wilson, Judith. "A Conversation with Toni Morrison." Taylor-Guthrie, Danille, ed. *Conversations with Toni Morrison*. Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1994. 129-137. Print.

Wyatt, Jean, "Giving Body to the Word: The Maternal Symbolic in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*," *PMLA* 108.3 1993: 474- 88. Print.

(Supervisor)

अध्यक्ष
(डी.आर.सी.)
दुर्ग महा.रायपुर(छ.ग.)

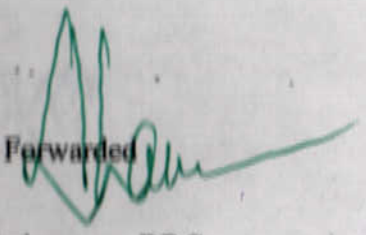
Mitun Bhowmick
(Candidate)



Signature of the Supervisor

Mitun Bhowmick

Signature of the Candidate



Forwarded

Chairperson, DRC